DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 222 510 TM 820 653

AUTHOR Albright, Leonard
TITLE Development of a State System for Evaluating Disadvantaged and Handicapped Vocational Education Projects. Final Project Report.
SPONS AGENCY Vermont State Dept. of Education, Montpelier. Div. of Vocational-Technical Education.
PUB DATE Aug 82
NOTE 27p.; For related document, see TM 820 660.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Disabilities; Disadvantaged; *Evaluation Methods; *Program Evaluation; Program Implementation; Secondary Education; *Statewide Planning; *Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS *Vermont

ABSTRACT

The major activities and outcomes of a project involved in organizing a statewide system for evaluating special projects for disadvantaged and handicapped students enrolled in secondary-level vocational education programs are presented. A description of six major project activities is provided: (1) a review of evaluation systems and practices; (2) a report concerning integrating special needs into the existing system; (3) an evaluation system development; (4) an evaluation of the special needs of vocational centers; (5) a telephone interview followup; and (6) an evaluation procedures manual for local education agencies. Included in the appendix are: (1) a paper offering recommendations for incorporating a special needs component into the State vocational education evaluation system; (2) a followup assessment guide used for interviewing selected local education agency personnel who had participated in the local evaluations; and (3) a listing of the types of information obtained from a local evaluation. (Author/PN)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED222510

DEVELOPMENT OF A STATE SYSTEM FOR EVALUATING DISADVANTAGED AND HANDICAPPED VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROJECTS

FINAL PROJECT REPORT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

L. Albright

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Prepared by:

Leonard Albright, Ph.D.
Visiting Associate Professor
Departments of Vocational Education
and Special Education
University of Vermont

Submitted to:

Arthur Ericson & Robert Watson
Division of Vocational Education
Vermont Department of Education
Montpelier, Vermont

TM 826 653

August, 1982

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the major activities and outcomes of a project involved in organizing a statewide vocational special needs evaluation system. The project was funded by the Vermont Division of Vocational Education and conducted at the University of Vermont (UVM) during fiscal year 1982. The director of the project was Leonard Albright, Visiting Associate Professor in the vocational and special education departments at UVM. James Frasier, advanced graduate student at UVM on sabbatical leave from the Hartford, Vermont area vocational center, served as project coordinator. Robert Watson, Special Needs Consultant in the Vermont Division of Vocational Education, was the state agent who worked closely with the project staff. The state approved funding for this project was approximately $7,000.

PURPOSE

The overall purpose of the project was to develop a system for evaluating the local vocational special needs projects funded by the State Division. The system was to be used in FY 82 to evaluate special projects in four vocational centers and as a process for project evaluations in subsequent years.

PROCEDURES

The procedures employed in this project are reported in terms of major activities that occurred during the fiscal year.

Activity 1: Review of Evaluation Systems and Practices

In order to capitalize on prior evaluation efforts in other sectors of the country, a review of existing systems and practices in state and local education

agencies was conducted. This review was particularly helpful in organizing the structure, format and sequence of the Vermont system.

One important "spin-off" of the review was an indepth study of evaluation systems in other rural states.[1] This investigation was conducted by Jim Frasier as part of his graduate program. Mr. Frasier is presently writing the complete report of the study and expects to present the findings to his thesis committee in September or October, 1982.

Activity 2: Preparation of a Report on Integrating Special Needs Component into Existing Vocational Education Evaluation System in Vermont

Project staff review and discussions of evaluation in the vocational special needs arena clearly pointed to a need for building a comprehensive evaluation system that accounts for all handicapped and disadvantaged (H & D) students enrolled in vocational education. While the focus of the project was on developing a system for evaluating state-funded vocational special needs projects, we recognized that sole concentration on state-funded projects would result in an incomplete evaluation effort. Many H & D students are benefitting from special project services, but not all H & D students in vocational education are recipients of such services. Therefore, and in addition to the projects evaluation system development, the project staff prepared a report for the Division which offered a series of recommendations on how a special needs component could easily be incorporated into the existing Vermont vocational education evaluation system.[2] That is, the Quality Assessment System (QAS). By including the special needs component in the QAS and also having an evaluation system for state-funded projects, a more complete, accurate and ongoing picture of the delivery of vocational education to H & D students in Vermont could be obtained by the State Division. A copy of this report appears in Appendix A.

---

[1]Frasier, James R. An Analysis of State Systems for Evaluating Vocational Education Programs and Services for Handicapped and Disadvantaged Students. Graduate Thesis Proposal. Departments of Vocational and Special Education, University of Vermont. February 4, 1981.

[2]Frasier, J. & Albright, L. Toward Building a Special Needs Evaluation Component into the QAS. Report submitted to the Vermont Division of Vocational Education, October 30, 1981.

Activity 3: Development of the State Vocational Special Needs Project Evaluation System

The initial conception of the evaluation system consisted of three major phases; 1) a local self-review, 2) an onsite evaluation conducted by a third-party evaluator and 3) the development of a local improvement plan, based on the findings from the self and external evaluations. These three phases, along with supporting instructions and materials, were organized in a manual for local education agency personnel and field-tested at one vocational center. Feedback on the evaluation system from personnel at the field-test site was quite positive and many helpful suggestions were offered for improving the system. As a result of this field-testing, the following changes were made:

A) The faculty questionnaire was shortened in length and individual questionnaire items were written in clearer, more concise terms.

B) A student questionnaire was added to the system.

C) An indepth review session between the external evaluator and the local evaluation steering committee was included as a major activity during the second day of the external evaluation.

D) The procedures and timelines for conducting the evaluation were further specified; and the roles of the State Consultant, the external evaluator and the local evaluation steering committee were more clearly delineated.

Of the above changes, the one that later proved to be a significant addition to the evaluation effort was the indepth review session between the local committee and the external evaluator. This session enabled both parties to discuss their observations about project strengths and weaknesses and collectively examine some practical action steps for project improvement.

Shortly after the pilot testing, the procedures manual was revised and prepared for use in evaluating four vocational special needs projects.

Activity 4: Evaluation of Vocational Special Needs Projects at Four (4) Vocational Centers

The State Special Needs Consultant scheduled evaluations of special needs projects in four vocational centers and these evaluations were conducted during the months of March through June, 1982. External evaluator reports were forwarded to the State Consultant and he subsequently worked with personnel from each vocational center on project improvement plans.

One important project outcome of these evaluations was the organization of a standard reporting format for the external evaluator's report. Each report contains information on the evaluation procedures and the major findings. The format includes information reported in the following sequence:

- Cover Page — Identifies the project evaluated by title, the person responsible for preparing the report (ie, the external evaluator) and the date that the report was submitted to the State Division.
- Purposes of Evaluation — Presents the rationale for the evaluation and the dates of the external evaluation.
- Evaluation Methods and Procedures — Summarizes the self-study procedures used, followed with a description of the procedures used during the external evaluation phase.
- Description of the Project — Provides an overall descriptive summary of the project.
- Summary of Findings — Lists projects strengths and areas in need of strengthening, along with supporting data for each observation noted.
- Recommendations — The evaluator provides specific recommendations for project improvement, based on her/his on-site observations; information reported in the self-evaluation materials; and information discussed during the indepth review session with the local steering committee.

Activity 5: Follow-up Telephone Interview with LEA Personnel Who Participated in the Evaluation

In order to assess the impact of the evaluation on local education agency (LEA) personnel and to obtain additional suggestions on how the system could be improved, telephone interviews were conducted with the coordinators of three vocational special needs projects and a vocational director. These interviews took place in June, approximately a month following the evaluations.

A telephone interview guide was developed by the project staff and reviewed by the state consultant. A copy of the guide used by the project director during the telephone interviews appears in Appendix B. Questions relative to the self-evaluation phase, the external evaluation phase, the external evaluation report, and the local project improvement planning process were asked. Information from the respondents on the perceived usefulness of the evaluation effort was also sought, along with recommendations for improving the evaluation system.

Many favorable comments about the evaluation system were received. In particular, the respondents found the review session with the external evaluator and the local committee to be very productive and worthwhile; in terms of "getting everything out on the table" and examining ways to improve the project.

The positive comments received about the self-study phase of the evaluation were concentrated around the theme of helping others in the district better understand the project goals and operational procedures. Two commenters did mention difficulty in obtaining the full participation of the persons selected to serve on the local evaluation steering committee. Conflicting schedules was the reason most often cited in explaining this difficulty.

The commenters were also positive about the quality of the external evaluation report. The format was easy to follow and the information was helpful to the committee in preparing the local improvement plan.

A few recommendations were offered for improving the evaluation system, but they were not major items of concern. Perhaps a quote from one respondent best summarizes the overall reaction to the evaluation. This person stated:

> "I initially thought the evaluation was more B.S., but it wasn't! I'm glad it happened - It caused all of us to learn from it and come up with a plan of attack."

Activity 6: Preparation, Printing and Dissemination of Evaluation Procedures Manual for Local Education Agencies

The final version of the evaluation procedures manual for LEA's was completed in early July 1982. Although the content and procedures essentially remained the same as in the prior evaluations of four projects, substantial work was done on refining the procedures; communicating the content in a clearer manner; and in organizing the flow of the document for reader ease and consumer use.

A chart provided in Appendix C identifies the types of information obtained by the State from the vocational special needs project evaluation system. This information comes from students, faculty, project staff, guidance and administrative personnel at the LEA level and the external evaluator.

The revised version of the manual was carefully reviewed by the project staff and the state consultant before it was sent to the UVM print shop. It is anticipated that 250 copies of the manual will be ready for dissemination in mid-August, 1982. A small number of copies will remain at UVM, with most going to the State Division for use in subsequent project evaluations. Multiple copies were printed so that they are available for future use by LEA personnel participating in project evaluations. It should be noted that funds for the printing of the manual were provided by the Leadership Training Institute in Vocational and Special Education at the University of Illinois.

OUTCOMES

In addition to the completed evaluations of vocational special needs projects at four vocational centers, the following accomplishments can be attributed to the UVM evaluation project:

1) Preparation of a Report on Recommendations for Incorporating Special Needs Component Into Existing State Vocational Education Evaluation System (QAS)

2) Development of a System for State Evaluation of Locally-Based Vocational Special Needs Projects

3) Preparation of a Project Evaluation Procedures Manual for LEA Personnel, Based on a Substantial Review and Try-out Process

4) Production of Multiple Copies of Evaluation Procedures Manual for Subsequent Use by State and Local Education Agencies

5) Preparation of a Final Report Describing Major Project Activities and Accomplishments

NEXT STEPS

Within a one-year period, an evaluation system was conceived, field-tested and used in four vocational centers. While much was accomplished in a relatively short period of time, additional work will need to be done to establish the system as an ongoing function of the State Division. Three areas of work are discussed in the rest of this section. The first two areas pertain to the evaluation of special needs projects. The third area points to a need for focusing on H & D students in the State's evaluation of vocational education programs.

Since the successful operation of the evaluation system involves a great deal of communication and collaboration among the participating LEA personnel, the state consultant, and the external evaluator, special attention should be given to the coordination function during the second year of the system's operation. A focus of this nature should help in detecting potential weak points in the system and in making adjustments in a timely manner.

In order for the projects evaluation system to be more functional over time, there is an immediate need to organize a cadre of personnel to serve as external evaluators. It is recommended that these individuals be identified, trained and experienced as external evaluators during the upcoming year. It is further suggested that this process be monitored closely and that a procedures manual for external evaluators accompany

these activities. A state commitment in this direction should prove significant in establishing a workable system for the evaluation of state-funded vocational special needs projects in future years.

As mentioned earlier, the creation of a vocational special needs project evaluation system is, indeed, a positive development, but it does not account for all H & D students enrolled in Vermont's vocational education programs. Nor does it address many of the evaluative questions posed in the Vermont vocational education program evaluation system. Therefore, it is recommended that the Division initiate plans to include an H & D component in the ongoing State vocational education evaluation system. The recommendations offered in the report in Appendix A should be a helpful reference in such deliberations.

APPENDIX A

Report on Integrating Special Needs Component Into Vermont QAS

REPORT #1

TOWARD BUILDING A SPECIAL NEEDS EVALUATION COMPONENT INTO THE QAS

Recommendations for Phase I of the
Special Needs Program Evaluation Project

Submitted to the
Division of Vocational Technology Education
Vermont Department of Education

by

Vermont Special Needs Program Evaluation Project Staff

Jim Frasier, Coordinator
Len Albright, Director

October 30, 1981

The Vermont Special Needs Program Evaluation Project represents an effort to develop a comprehensive statewide system for evaluating the vocational programs and services provided to disadvantaged and handicapped students. The purpose of this first report is to communicate a direction for the first phase of the proposed comprehensive evaluation system. This phase will focus on integrating the special needs evaluation system into the Quality Assessment System (QAS) presently used in Vermont to evaluate regular vocational education programs. The QAS, as presently organized and administered, does not specifically evaluate services and programs for the special needs population (ie both disadvantaged and handicapped). However, much of the information required to evaluate services and programs for these two special populations is already collected by the QAS. Without modifying the QAS in any form or manner, QAS information can be utilized to aid in the evaluation of services and programs for handicapped and disadvantaged vocational education students.[1]

By integrating the proposed special needs component into the QAS, this phase will offer a system component which:

1) fulfills the requirements for evaluation of special populations services and programs as described by PL 94-482, Title II, Section 104.402, (d). (See Appendix A)

2) is in agreement with the QAS system's format, thus, avoiding duplication of evaluation efforts at the local education agency level;

[1] The focus of this phase is on developing a system for evaluating the services and programs provided to handicapped and disadvantaged populations enrolled in regular vocational education programs. The information herein does not deal with those students enrolled in exemplary projects or programs. The evaluation of such exemplary projects or programs will be addressed in a subsequent report submitted to the Division.

3) utilizes QAS information collected for the evaluation of regular vocational education programs; and

4) is compatable with the QAS self-study and On-Site Assessment Team visit format.

PROPOSED DIRECTIONS FOR UTILIZING THE QAS

Usable Parts of QAS

Without any modification in the QAS format or instruments, the following instruments may be used in evaluating vocational education for the special needs population:

1) The Vocational Education Follow-up Questionnaire (page 27 of the QAS);

2) The Employer Evaluation of Vocational Program Graduates (page 30 and 31 of QAS);

3) The Survey on Graduates Employed in Family Owned Business (page 32 and 33 of QAS); and

4) The Secondary Completer Follow-Up Report, Part A (1) and Part A (2) (page 12 and 13 of QAS).

By utilizing information from the QAS instruments, Numbers 1 through 4 above, this approach will satisfy the results of additional services as measured by the suggested criteria under paragraph (c) of Section 104.402 in PL 94-482, which states:

> "Results of Student Employment success as measured, for example, by:
>
> (1) Rates of employment and unemployment;
> (2) Wage rates;
> (3) Duration of employment; and
> (4) Employer satisfaction with performance of vocational education students as compared with performance of persons who have not had vocational education."

Need For A Definition of Student Achievement

A definition of student achievement will need to be developed to satisfy results of additional services and programs as measured

by the suggested criteria under paragraph (b) of Section 104.402 of PL 94-482, which states the evaluation shall be in terms of:

"Results of student achievement as measured, for example, by:

(1) Standard Occupational proficiency measures;
(2) Criterion referenced tests; and
(3) Other examinations of students' skills, knowledge attitudes, and readiness for entering employment successfully."

DEFINITION OPTIONS

OPTION #1

The local education agency can define a "program completer" and a "program leaver" based upon the service or program designed for the handicapped or disadvantaged participant. This need not necessarily be the same as the regular vocational programs' definition in which the handicapped or disadvantaged student cannot succeed.

OR

OPTION #2

The State Education Agency (SEA) can define this based upon handicapped and disadvantaged definitions in the Rules and Regulations (See Appendix B).

At present the project staff recommends the option of using an SEA definition for defining what is to measure the "Results of student achievement" in a special populations service or program. This definition could be:

"Student Achievement for a handicapped or disadvantaged students is determined by the student's successful completion of his/her respective regular vocational education program."

The rationale for this definition serving as the measure of student success in a special population program are:

(1) A special service or program is designed to be responsive to the individual needs of the student in order to enable the student to succeed in a regular vocational program. Therefore, any measure other than the student's personal success in the vocational program as the result of the special populations program is inappropriate; and

(2) The number of regular vocational program completers and the number of regular vocational program leavers are recorded by name within the vocational center. Thus, by using a list of special population program participants enrolled in the Center, a comparison of program participants can be made between those that are receiving services and those students who are of the non-special needs population. This comparison will provide a strong indicator of the results of student achievement because of participation in a specialized program.

SUGGESTED PROCEDURE FOR INTEGRATION

If the Division is supportive of the Project staff's recommendations for integrating the proposed component in the QAS, the Project staff recommends the following procedures be carried out:

Step 1) Review of one LEA's QAS materials that was evaluated during the 1980-81 school year to uncover any problems associated with procedures being proposed by this project.

Step 2) Pilot testing of the proposed instruments and procedures by the Project staff at four (4) centers during the 1981-82 school year which are currently scheduled for a QAS review.

It is also recommended that meetings with the Task Force on Vocational Needs be held following Step 1 and during and after completion of Step 2. These meetings would help to

assure support and participation of interested individuals in the overall development of this component of the proposed comprehensive evaluation system.

By carrying out these procedures the Project staff, as well as the Division, will be able to assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of the integrated approach proposed in this report.

APPENDIX B

Follow-up Telephone Interview Guide for LEA Personnel Who Participated in Project Evaluation

Follow-up Telephone Interview Guide
for
LEA Personnel Who Went Through
Vocational Special Needs Evaluation

The series of questions that follow will be asked of the vocational director and the project coordinator at each vocational center evaluated during the 1981-82 school year. The questions seek information about four components of the evaluation system (self-evaluation, external evaluation, evaluation report and local program improvement plan). Reaction to the overall evaluation effort is also sought. This information will be obtained through individual telephone interviews.

I. Self-Evaluation Phase

A. Before the arrival of the external evaluator, Jim Frasier, a local evaluation steering committee conducted a self-evaluation (Sections I & II). What were the benefits of this self-evaluation for the steering committee?

B. Did the local steering committee encounter any difficulties in doing the self-evaluation?

C. Was the work involved in doing the self-evaluation a good investment of personnel time? (Was the information gathered useful and used?)

II. External Evaluation Phase

D. During the first day of his visit, the external evaluator took time to analyze the questionnaire responses of administrators, faculty and students to the special needs project, and conducted personal interviews with some of these people. Do you feel that the activities conducted by the evaluator during this first day were helpful to the evaluation effort? Please explain. Also, how might the first day be strengthened?

E. Did you find the meeting with the evaluator and the steering committee during the second day to be helpful to the evaluation effort? How? Also, how might this be strengthened?

III. Evaluation Report Phase

F. Did you find the evaluation report to accurately reflect the observations discussed during the external evaluator's visit? Please explain. How might the report be strengthened?

G. Was the external evaluator's report helpful to the local steering committee in preparing your local program improvement plan? How?

IV. Local Program Improvement Plan Phase

H. Who were involved in developing the local plan for program improvement?

I. Following the preparation of the program improvement plan, the State Vocational Special Needs Consultant visited your center to discuss your plan. Was this visit helpful and necessary? (Explain). How might this aspect be strengthened?

J. Was the process of developing and reviewing a local plan helpful in determining directions for the program?

V. Overall Comment on Evaluation Effort

K. While the evaluation of your project was a federally mandated activity, the evaluation was also set-up to help you in your program improvement effort. Do you feel that the evaluation conducted at the center did, in fact, produce information that was helpful to you for strengthening your program? (Please explain).

L. What overall recommendations would you suggest for improving the procedures used to evaluate your project?

APPENDIX C

Information Obtained from Vermont Special
Needs Projects Evaluation System

Information to be Obtained
from Vermont Special Needs Evaluation
System Manual

Section of Manual	Type of Information
INTRODUCTION	Evaluation Calendar/Schedule
PHASE I: SELF-EVALUATION	
Section A (Project Description)	1) Listing of Local Steering Committee Members 2) LEA Description of Project 3) Listing of Project Goals and Objectives 4) Student Identification, Referral, and Selection Criteria and Procedures 5) Procedures for Individualized Planning 6) Procedures for Monitoring Student Performance 7) Procedures for Monitoring Project Performance 8) Procedures for Terminating Student Services 9) Procedures for Student Follow-up 10) Examples of Project Success 11) Use of School and Community Resources 12) Special Needs Student Participation Rates for Current and Preceding Years (Male/Female Ratio, H & D Status) 13) Student Enrollment by Vocational Program Area (H & D Enrollment by grade level)
Section B (Internal Review) and Section C (Profile of Faculty Responses)	14) Vocational Faculty Ratings of Project's Operational and Planning Effectiveness 15) Administration and Guidance Ratings of Project's Operational and Planning Effectiveness 16) Student's Perceptions of Project's Operational and Planning Effectiveness 17) Project's Staff Ratings of Project's Operational and Planning Effectiveness

Section of Manual	Type of Information
PHASE II: EXTERNAL EVALUATION	18) External Evaluator's Report (Identifies project strengths, weaknesses and recommendations for improvement)
PHASE III: PROJECT IMPROVEMENT PLAN	19) LEA Plan for Improving Vocational Special Needs Project